

THE
PLAIN PATH-WAY

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H E A V E N;

O R,

A sure Guide to Eternity, in Fifteen
excellent Rules.



Dost thou not yet flow Love take hold on me,
And view Christ Bleeding, Dying, on the Tree,
He still thy Friend, thou still his Enemy.



Psal. 119. Vers 59, 60.

*I thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy
Testimonies; I made haste and delay'd not to keep thy
Commandments.*

To which is added,

Those excellent Sayings of Old Mr. Dodd. Fit for the
Perusal of all Christian Families.

Those Charitable Persons who buys a Quantity
to give away to their poor Neighbours, shall have
them after the Rate of 20 s. one Hundred.

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T H E
 PLAIN PATH-WAY
 T O
 H E A V E N, &c.

I thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies, I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Commandment. Plal. cxix. 59, 60.

R U L E I.

AS Inconsideration and delaying Occasion the loss of most Souls, and many Opportunities and Advantages even to good Men; let it be your daily Care to resist such fatal Enemies to your Peace and Safety. And that you may do it the more effectually, seek after a well-order'd steady and composed Mind, not easily ruffled with every petty Occurrence, which you shall find a strong Rampart against Satan and his Temptations. If you labour not after some Consistency of Spirit he'll shock and disturb a loose one at every turn. Be mindful then, and fortify your Souls against his At-

tacks



tacks of this Kind, and give not Way in lesser Matters, that you may stand stanch and firm on great Occasions. Train your Minds to it gradually, and a rooted Habit, confirm'd by God's Grace, will prove an immoveable Pillar to your Souls:

R U L E II.

Temper not with the Occasions of Sin, but keep at a prudent Distance from all Excitements to any ill Inclination, you find a Propensity too. Next to the Grace of God the main Strength of a Christian consists in this holy Caution. A Spark of Fire neglected a while bursts into an unconquerable Flame, till it devours all before it. A lustful Eye, if it be suffered to dwell on a suitable Object, they strike Fire as naturally as the Steel and Flint, and corrupt Nature, like Tinder catches it at the first Spark, and sets all in a Blaze. The best Men have so much left within them, as requires great Care and watchfulness. How careful then should such be, that find their Inclinations run too strong on some dangerous Objects.

R U L E III.

Set forward not with a meer notional, but a practical Sense of your own Insufficiency, and the Power and Faithfulness of Jesus Christ to help and assist you. Keep your Watch, and use all Care in avoiding Sin and Temptation; and when you fail, be not discouraged, nor yield farther, but redouble your Watch and Prayers. By that doing you will be faithful to your selves and him, in giving the Glory of your Safety to your Great Master.

R U L E

RULE IV.

Endeavour to act more out of Gratitude than slavish Fear. As this is more acceptable to God, so as it is a more chearful, 'tis likely to be a more lasting and successful Principle of Obedience.

RULE V.

Narrowly ward your Thoughts, and watch your Fancy as you would a Thief or mad-man. Don't think you are innocent because you have not wicked Objects in chase. Vanity disposes to Wickedness; and that cannot be innocent or indifferent, that hinders much Good. Holy Thoughts nourish the Soul as Food does, the vain Imaginations are like filling the Belly with the East Wind. Satan plays his Game this way with good men, and robs them of much Strength and Comfort, as he ruins the worst by unclean Imaginations.

RULE VI.

Let not the smallness of a Fault make you despise it and neglect Redress; for so it will grow upon you, and with it more, through a habitual Heedlessness, which will creep gradually upon you. Scorn to be conquered in little Mattets, as unsuitable to the Dignity of a Christian. Keep up Discipline, and that will keep you.

RULE VII.

Endeavour as much as may be to take Occasion from all Things whereby you have offended God,
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some way or other to glorifie him; and every Temptation offered afresh, strive to convert it some way to Gods Honour, by some holy Meditation and Ejaculation. This will be a Means to discourage Satan, when he sees his own Weapon turn'd upon him. Thus you may bring Antidotes out of Poison and improve your very Miscarriages to blessed Purposes, and the renewal of Repentance; so meet with less Temptations, and more easily overcome them.

RULE VIII.

Where Affections are once roused, 'twill be difficult to remove them; they often over-bear Convictions in good People, many time to the Prejudice of their Peace and Safety. Pray therefore, and strive to alter their Courses, where you find them mis-placed, and be very jealous where you perceive a strong Tendency to settle amiss, and be very cautious where you suffer them to settle again, which should be nowhere but in God All-sufficient, at least with any Prevalency. When you find them fastening to Earth, call them up to Christ their proper Center, if they strike deep and fasten any where else Sin soon will, and Disorders and Excesses grow amain.

RULE IX.

Seriously consider the bitter Sufferings of your Saviour; the sad Effects of your own Sins; what Sorrows they have cost you; and must to Eternity in unspeakable Torture, had not he interpos'd. Reflect on their Number, peculiar Aggravations against light, love, and wonderful long Sufference, and rouse

rouse up all to Original Sin and Corruption of Nature, and the boundless Wisdom of free Grace that made Provision for lost and most miserable Creatures, at such a costly Rate, in so amazing a Manner beyond the Reach of Wonder, to advance them to unconceivable-Blessedness. Dwell much and long on these Subjects, and they will not fail to humble you deeply; and the more effectually that Part is acted, the stronger will your Love breath after the blessed Jesus, which will the more enlarge the Souls Capacity to receive the Divine Impressions and Communications of Grace, Peace, and Joy.

RULE X.

Reflect often on the Excellency of Divine Providence, compare your Sins and Afflictions, the good God has brought out of them; this will keep you humble and resigned, and so blunt the Edge of your Sorrows: Nothing is more pleasing to God, than an entire Dependence on him, and Submission to his Will in the most difficult Cases: This is paying the highest Difference to his Will and Wisdom, as the Measure of Perfection, which exceedingly honours him: And nothing can make you more easy, peaceful and content: Did you suffer more by so doing, Gods Glory should be prefer'd before your own ease. But when Duty and Interest both jointly invite, not to comply must be Folly. He that displeases God must himself first or last, Duty discharged gives present Satisfaction, and must end well. Disobedience brings Guilt and Horror with it, and must end worse. *The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmities but a wounded*

ed Spirit who can bear. When that which should bear us up under Affliction is borne down by the Weight of it's own Guilt, what must then support it, and them both.

RULE XI.

Lose no Opportunity of doing Good, Time may last, but the Season may be over; and nothing is done so well as in its proper Season; well timing a Thing is the beauty of an Action; needless Delay hazards many Times both Ability and Inclination. We can command neither, but while they are in our Power; and the present Time is that only which makes us Masters of them. Apply this Rule to all Actions that respect Gods Glory, the Good of others or your own Souls Salvation.

RULE XII.

Unmortified Affections are the Nurseries of Temptation. Thus are we tempted and drawn away of our own Lust and enticed, and no doubt Satrain watches to improve every such Motion. If we are not aware of this and provide accordingly, we must fall an easy ray to his Craft and Power: And no Remedy is shurer than early Endeavours to quench the Sparks that kindle this Fire. Holy Resolution. Trust Watchfulness, and Prayer are highly useful, but be sure to pursue them in a Method which may render them successful. Therefore observe Rule the xiii.

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RULE XIII.

Live much above in communion with God; besides set and solemn Duties, think of him as much as you can, who is ever present with you: Look through the Mists of Time, the Businessess and Diversions of Life, stedfastly to the Son of Righteousness set him often before you, by repeated Acts of Faith, such Communion will strengthen the Union between him and the Soul, so bring down those Influences that will new mould the Affections, and teach you Spiritual Skill to resist Temptations. As Friends we are intimate with, soon impress us with their Ways and Manners, so this happy Converse is most Commendation and strongly impressive on the Soul. Such as we most love and admire we soonest imitate, and when we get and improve our Acquaintance with him that is altogether lovely, we cannot fail of Excitements of this Kind. The Soul of Man is an active Being, something it must and will delight itself in.

If it meet not with God, 'twill take up with the World; but one true Taste of him ravishes it out of the Embraces of sordid Objects: And this Vivification is the Root of all true Mortification. You may restrain a Lust, as you chain up a wild Beast; but that's its Nature: That proceeds from an inward vital Principal, which is the Love of God. Great Lights obscure the Lesser: Let in then the Sun, and it will put out your grocer Fires.

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RULE XIV.

After this Brunt is over Self-denial will grow easy, till Love to Christ make it look like a Pleasure, you'll then be apt to study it till it almost lose its Name and Nature. O blessed Attainment! now has the Soul gained its Health, Lustre and Vigour; never was it so sensible of its former Slavery, till it feels it self truly happy in this Freedom. Never leave therefore till you attain it, till your own blessed Experience make you feel what here only is Said.

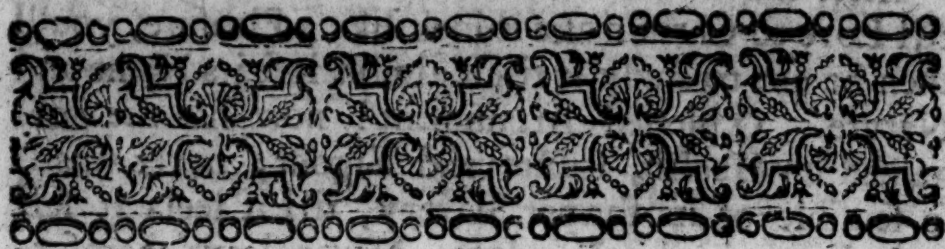
RULE XV.

This is the State of Christian Perfection all should strive after; and Such as do not, 'tis a sad Sign they are unacquainted with the Spiritual Life: A true Taste of its Charms will excite Desire. Tho' it be a State not without Sin, 'tis a State of Conquest, Safety, Peace and Joy: Not to affect it, is to shun our own Mercies, and argues Ignorance and Stupidity.

Those happy Souls pass from Glory to Glory, from one Degree of Grace to another, till Heaven crowns their blessed Hopes and Expectation. God grant us all Grace to aspire after this blissful State till we meet in that happy Place, for Jesus sake. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

T H E



THE
SAYINGS
OF THE
PIOUS Dr. DOD.

Nothing can hurt but Sin; and that shall not hurt us, if we can repent of it. And nothing can do us good but the Love and Favour of God in Christ; and that we shall have if we seek it.

II. No Man is in a sad Condition, but he that hath a hard Heart, and cannot Pray.

III. So much Sin, so much Sorrow; so much Holiness, so much Happiness.

IV. Make thy Sin thy greatest Sorrow; so shall thy Sorrow never hurt thee. Make Jesus Christ thy great Joy, so shalt thou never want Joy.

V. A Man that hath the Spirit of Prayer, hath more than if he had all the World.

VI. Two Things he commanded to a Married Couple, Cares and Strifes; For the first, Let your Cares be, which shall please God most. For your Strifes, let them be, which shall love another best: So will your Cares and Strifes be to the purpose, so will all needless Cares and Strifes vanish.

VII. If you be in a Married Estate know and believe it, though you might have had a better, or richer Wife or Husband; yet sure enough you could never have had a fitter, because it was appointed by God in Heaven, before it could be accomplished here on Earth: And therefore, though mutual Love be not performed to thee, yet do thou thy Part in Obedience to God, and thou shalt be sure to have Comfort in the End; though God exercise thee with Chastisement for a Time.

VIII. There are no Afflictions or Miseries befall us, but by God's Appointment, and cannot hurt us, but must needs do us good, if we be God's Children. But First, Be sure you mix not Sin with them, for that only makes them Bitter. Secondly, Look not at the Rod, but at him that smiteth; for that causeth fretting and fainting both.

IX. If thou desirest to be assured that thy Sins be forgiven thee, labour to forgive Injuries and Offences done unto thee, according to that in *Mat. 6. 14. 15.* Four Things considered to this End. 1. Christ's Example, who forgave and prayed for his Enemies. 2. Christ's Command, *When ye pray forgive, if you have ought against any Man.* 3. Christ's Promise, *If ye forgive, ye shall be forgiven.* Christ's Threatning, *If ye forgive not, ye shall not be forgiven.*

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X. In all Miseries and Distress, 'tis best Wisdom to go to that Friend that is most near, most willing, and most able to help, such a Friend is God.

XI. He would often say, he had no Reason to complain of his Crosses, being they were the bitter Fruit of his Sins.

XII. Where Sin lyes heavy, Crosses lye light; and contrary, where Crosses lye heavy, Sins lye light.

XIII. Either Praying will make a Man give over Sinning, or Sin vwill make a Man give over Praying.

XIV. Four Things vve may learn from Children.
1. They take no necessary Care. 2. They Sleep without Malice. 3. They are content with their Condition, 4. They are Humble; the Child of a King, will play with the Child of a Beggar.

XV. There is no Affliction so small, but we should sink under it, if God upheld not; and there is no Sin so great, but we should commit it, if God restrained not.

XVI. If we be railed on, or reviled, or injuriously dealt by Friend or Foe, we should be more troubled for the Sin against God, than the Offence done to ourselves.

XVII. A godly Man is like a Sheep, every Place is the better for him where he comes. A wicked Man is like a Goat, every Place is the worse for him, he leaves a stinking Saviour behind him.

XVIII. Sanctified Afflictions are Spiritual Promotion, and are far better for Christian, than all the Silver and Gold in the World, being that the Tryal of our Faith is much more precious than Gold which perisheth. *Pet. 1. 7.*

XIX.

XIX. Directions for the Lord's Day. Make the Sabbath the Market-Day for thy Soul. Loose not one Hour, but be either Praying, Conferring, or Meditating; think not thy own Thoughts; let every Day have its Duties: Turn the Sermon heard, into Matter of Prayer; Instruction into Petition, Reproof into Confession, Consolation into Thanksgiving: Think much of the Sermon heard, and make something of it all the Week long.

XX. Directions for every Day. First, for Morning. Every Morning presuppose, 1. I must die. 2. I may die every Night. 3. Whether will my Soul go, to Heaven or to Hell? Secondly, for Night. Every Night ask my Soul these Questions. 1. Have I twice this Day humbled myself before God in private? 2. How did I pray? In Faith and Love? 3. What have my Thoughts been this Day? 4. What have I been in my Place and Calling? 5. What have I been in Company? Did I speak of good Things? Or did I hear, and with *Mary* lay up? 6. If God, with the Morning, renewed Mercies was I thankful? 2. If the Day afforded me Matter of Sorrows, did I fret; Or did I lie in the Dust before God? When you have this done, where you have been failing, confess it with Sorrow; the less Work you will have to do when Death comes. Thus every Night reckon right with thy God. This hath been my daily Course, and shall be my Practice till I dye.

XXI. What we win by Prayer, we shall wear with Comfort.

XXII. There is a Two fold Assurance: 1. A Sunshine, 2. A Moon-shine Assurance. The first is that
full

full Assurance in *Heb. x. 20.* The Moon-shine is that of the Word, *To the which we do well that we take heed, 1. Thes. i. 5. 2 Pet. i. 18.* The first is given but a few, and that but seldom; and that either upon some great Duty to be performed, or some new Condition of Life to be entered into, or upon some great Sufferings to be undergone; of which one saith, *The Hour comes, is but seldom, and the stay of it is short.* The second is that we must trust to, relying upon the sure Word of God, by the Faith of Adherence, when we want the other, the Spirit of full Assurance.

XXIII. For the Comfort of God's People, he observed out of the *129th Psalm*, That though the Wicked were the Plowers of the Righteous, and would Plow deep, make long Furrows, and even Plow their Hearts out, if they could; yet the Righteous Lord that sits in Heaven, laughs at them; and cuts their Cords, and then they can plow no more.

XXIV. In Case of Persecutions and other Sufferings, God's People should seriously consider these four Things: 1. God wills them, and sends them: Now God's Will is a perfect Rule of Righteousness: And what God doth, is so well done, that it could not be better done. 2. There is need of them, or else we should not have them. 3. Their Number, Measure and Continuance, is determined by God; they are but for a Moment, and last but for a few Days, *Rev. ii. 10.* Not too heavy, too many, or too long, as the Devil would have them; nor too few, nor too short, or too light, as our Corrupt Natures would have them. 4. Their End is a *weight of Glory*, and the Crown that attends them Everlasting, *2 Cor. iv. 7.*

XXV. Three Things makes a Man count himself happy here below. 1. to have a good Estate 2. To have it in a good Place. 3. By good Neighbours. Now these Three, they that die in the Lord, eminently enjoy. 1. Their heavenly Inheritance is great, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard the like*, 1. Cor. ii. 9. 2. 'Tis in a good Place. 2. Cor. v. 1. Heaven, which is a House made for them, and made by God, and therefore must needs Good. 3. By good Neighbours; God, Christ, the Spirit, Angels and Saints. *Adam* had a good Inheritance, and in a good Place; but he had an evil Neighbour of the Devil, that troubled him, and married all; but there's no ill Neighbours in Heaven.

XXVI The Passions of God's People do not hinder the Success of their Prayers; *Elias* was a Man subject to like Passion as we are, and he prayed, and was heard, *Jam. v. 17*.

XXVII. Three Things concur to the making up of the Sin against the Holy Ghost. 1. Light in the Mind. 2. Malice in the Heart. 2. The insensibleness of the Sin. He that fears he hath committed it, hath not committed it.

XXVIII. The Reason why many are not wrought upon, that live under powerful Means of Grace, when many that live at a Distance, and come seldom under a Powerful Preacher, are wrought upon by it; He used to give by this Similitude: As in a Market-town, the Town's-People matter not so much for Market-wares, as they that live in the Country; they come to buy, and must and will have what they want, whatever they pay for it; whereas they that live in the
Town

Town think they may buy at any Time, and so neglect buying at present; and at the last oftentimes they are disappointed.

XXIX. To persuade us not to return Railing for Railing, he would say, That if a Dog barked at a Sheep, a Sheep will not bark at a Dog.

XXX. Four Arguments against immoderate Cares for Earthly Things, that we might not dishonour or deny God, he observed out of *Mat. vi. 1.* 'Tis less. 2. 'Tis Brutish. 3. 'Tis Heathenish. 1. Needless; what need we care, and God too? *ver. xxx. 31, 32.* *Our Father knows we have need to these Things,* and he bids us, *Be careful for nothing, but cast our Cares on him who careth for us,* 'Tis Brutish, nay more than Brutish; *ver. 26.* *Consider the Fowls of the Air, and the Ravens that he feeds, they Toil not.* 3. It is Bootless, and to no Purpose; *ver. 27.* *Which of you by taking Thought, can add one Cubit to his Stature, or Penny to his Estate?* 4. It is Heathenish, *After all these Things the Gentiles seek, ver. 22.*

XXXI. Many in the World take their Saintship upon Trust, and Trade in the Duties of Religion, with the Credit they have gained from others Opinions: They believe themselves to be Christians, because others hoped them to be such, and so zealously Trade in Duties that lie outmost, to keep up their Credit, but never look for a Stock of solid Grace within; and thus undoes many.

XXXII. As we read of *daily Bread*; so of *daily Crosses*, *Luke ix. 23,* which we are bid to *take*, not to *make*: We need not make Crosses ourselves, as we are too Prone to do; but let God make them for us:
Crosses

Crosses being made in Heaven, best fit the Saints Backs, and we must not lay them down, till they and we lye down together.

XXXIII. It was a notable Saying of a holy Man, *Quench Hell, and burn Heaven, yet will I love and fear my God.*

XXXIV. It is not crying out upon the Devil, nor claiming against Sin in Prayer, for Discourse, but fighting with the Devil, and mortifying our Lusts, that God chiefly looks upon.

XXXV. The empty Professor disappoints two at once: 1. The World, who seeing his Leaves, expects Fruit, but finds none. 2. Himself, who thinks to reach Heaven, but falls short of it.

XXXVI. The only Way for a distressed Soul, that cannot fasten on former Comforts, by Reason of future Backslidings, and so Questions all his former Evidences, to renew his Repentance, as if he had never believed.

XXXVII. Some are apt to think, if they are in such a Family, under such a Minister, out of such Temptations, the Devil would not meddle with them as he doth: But such should know, that so long as his old Friend is alive within, he will be knocking at the Door without.

XXXVIII. The Seeds were sown so deep in the Nature of the Devil and the Saint, that they will never be rooted out, till the Devil ceases to be a Devil, and Sin to be Sin, and the Saint to be a Saint.

XXXIX. The Sinner is the Devil's Miller, always grinding; and the Devil is always filling the Hopper, that the Mill may not stand still.

XL. There be some Sins that an ignorant Person can commit; but there are far more than an ignorant Person cannot but commit.

XLI. There be five Ties by which the God of Heaven hath bound himself to be the Saints Life-guard against the Powers of Darkness. 1. His Relation to them, as Father. 2. His Love to them, they being the Birth of his Everlasting Counsel, and Partakers of his own Likeness. 3. The Price of his Son's Blood, and his Covenant with them. 4. Their Dependance upon him, and Expectation from him in all their Straights: Now *the expectations of the Poor shall not perish*, Psalm ix. 18. 5. Christ's present Employment in Heaven, is to see all Things carried fairly between God and them.

XLII. Brown Bread with the Gospel is good Fare.

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